

bring the proposed action of the government into clearer relief if, in presenting to parliament the statement of the government's attitude with reference thereto, I reverse the order of presentation adopted by the commission and first take up the miscellaneous recommendations which find their place at the end of the report, and proceed therefrom to the far-reaching recommendations which are to be found in earlier subdivisions.

Commencing, then, with the last mentioned recommendation, namely, the immediate publication of a special memorandum giving statistics of social and economic progress in the maritime provinces since confederation, I would say that the memorandum is already in type, and that such number of copies will be published as the House may direct.

The government accepts the recommendation made with reference to Prince Edward Island, that, inasmuch as there are no large industries in Prince Edward Island which would justify the establishment of an institution for technical education and as agriculture is their principal interest, technical education legislation should be given a broad application, and that agricultural education should be deemed to be covered by the term "technical education," and action is being taken accordingly.

The more detailed survey of New Brunswick and an exhaustive survey of Prince Edward Island which it is recommended the Geological department should undertake is being carried out.

The commission's recommendation with respect to the appointment of a deputy minister whose duties will be confined to what at present constitutes the fisheries section of the Department of Marine and Fisheries will be carried out.

With respect to the commission's recommendations concerning the possible acquisition of the St. John and Quebec railway, and the Kent Northern railway, the government is of the opinion that the matters referred to are, in some particulars, incidental to the larger transportation problems of which mention is made in the report and to which the attention of parliament will be invited at the present session, and that the situation with respect to these railways will in no wise be prejudiced if the course recommended by the commission is permitted to await a knowledge of the probable effect of the adoption of such legislation as may be enacted with respect to maritime railways generally.

The recommendation of the commission, with respect to closer coöperation between the federal and provincial governments on the question of maritime province colonization, accords with the policy of the government as

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

repeatedly set forth. The federal authorities will cordially welcome that larger measure of coöperation on the part of the provinces which the commission's report recognizes as both desirable and necessary.

With reference to the natural basic products of the maritime provinces, namely, agriculture, fish, timber and coal, the government shares the view expressed by the commission that aspects that arise from the character of these natural basic products of the maritime provinces "lie at the very foundation of the economic prosperity of these provinces," and that, as respects these subject matters, "no greater dis-service could be done than to evade deliberate decision."

As respects the specific recommendation that the Dominion government should apply its mind to the proposition of a mutual trade treaty for forest products and fish, it may be pointed out that reciprocal trade treaties in natural products are, and have been for many years, a part of Liberal trade policy. The attempt of a great Nova Scotian in 1911 to remedy the situation by a reciprocity treaty did not, in our opinion, meet with the support it should have from the maritimes. We believe that to the defeat of the proposed reciprocal trade agreement, more than to all other factors combined, may be traced the causes of existing economic depression in the maritime provinces. Our policy remains one of seeking to advance, as opportunity affords, mutual trade agreement in natural products.

A declaration of our readiness and our willingness to make an arrangement with the United States whenever they are ready to meet us on fair terms, will be found in the following clause which, at the instance of Mr. Fielding, the then Minister of Finance, was inserted in 1923 in our tariff laws:

The Governor in Council may authorize any minister of the crown to enter into negotiations with any authorized representative of the government of the United States with a view to the making of a commercial agreement between the two countries on terms that may be deemed mutually beneficial. Any agreement so made shall be subject to the approval of the parliament of Canada.

This is a general indication of our willingness to make a commercial treaty with our neighbours. If favourably entertained, some time would have to elapse before an agreement could be made and brought into effect. It would require action by the United States congress as well as by the Canadian parliament. Under the present law of the United States there is a privilege granted to the President of the United States to make certain reductions of duties if he likes to do so.